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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council: progress report on the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Bernd Niehaus (Costa Rica), on the basis of informal consultations

Progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and its resolution 1999/6 of 23 July 1999,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation[1] and of the consolidated list of issues related to the coordination of operational activities;[2]

2. *Reiterates* that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, *inter alia*, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality, impartiality and multilateralism and their ability to respond to the development needs of developing countries in a flexible manner, and that all operational activities must be country-driven, in response to and in accordance with the national development plans, policies and priorities of the recipient Governments concerned;

3. *Notes* the progress achieved in simplification and harmonization of programming cycles and procedures and calls on the funds and programmes and specialized agencies involved in the coordination efforts in the field to take further

[1] E/2000/46 and Add.1 and 2 and Add.2/Corr.1.
[2] E/2000/CRP.1.

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steps to enhance and ensure the sustainability of this process, in particular in the area of decentralization and financial management;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, as part of the preparation of the next triennial policy review of 2001, to assess, in full and close cooperation with programming countries, the extent to which such harmonization and simplification have benefited the programme countries, *inter alia*, through greater coordination and synergy in programme design and implementation, as well as the obstacles encountered, and to make appropriate recommendations for consideration at the next triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, utilizing, *inter alia*, the ongoing management process and an assessment, *inter alia*, of the joint mid-term review, joint evaluation and joint programme experiences, as appropriate;

5. *Emphasizes* that simplification and harmonization of procedures, in the context of decentralization of processes, as adopted by the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, should be responsive to the needs of developing countries, while bearing in mind the impact of these procedures on the capacity of recipient countries to integrate the United Nations system's programmes into the national development process;

6. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring full government participation in the formulation and the implementation of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and urges the funds and programmes, in full and close consultation and cooperation with them, to continue to review these processes at the country level with a view to effecting streamlining and simplification so as to reduce the administrative and financial costs to the recipient Governments as well as to the United Nations system;

7. *Notes* the progress and the challenges with regard to the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, and encourages the funds and programmes to ensure that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework promotes a country-driven, collaborative and coherent response by the United Nations system so as to achieve a greater impact at the country level fully consistent with, and in support of, national priorities;

8. *Also notes* that coordination activities, though beneficial, represent transaction costs that are borne by both recipient countries and the United Nations system organizations and emphasizes the need for their continuous evaluation, and for an analysis and assessment of costs as compared with the total programme expenditures of operational activities for development, in order to ensure maximum efficiency and feasibility;

9. *Reaffirms* the importance of independent, transparent and impartial joint and periodic evaluations of operational activities at the country level, under the leadership of recipient Governments, and with the support of the Resident Coordinator system, to enhance their efficiency, effectiveness and impact;

10. *Notes* the preparations for the impact evaluation of operational activities, particularly of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 53/192, as part of the preparations for the next triennial policy review;

11. *Invites* the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, with the full involvement of the recipient Government concerned in the process of such evaluation, to participate actively and to support the ongoing study of the Secretariat;

12. *Encourages* greater cooperation between the World Bank, the regional banks and all funds and programmes, with a view to achieving increased complementarity and better division of labour, as well as enhanced coherence in their sectoral activities, building on the existing arrangements and fully in accordance with the priorities of the recipient Government and, in this regard, emphasizes the importance of ensuring, under the leadership of national Governments, greater consistency between the strategic frameworks developed by the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions;

13. *Notes* the ongoing dialogue of members of the United Nations Development Group with the Bretton Woods institutions, and encourages similar consultations with the World Trade Organization, fully recognizing the primary coordinating role of programme country Governments as well as the respective mandates of these institutions, and requests them to report to the Council on this dialogue at its next substantive session, especially in the context of preparations for the triennial policy review;

14. *Requests* the United Nations system to take further measures to improve the effective incorporation of technical cooperation among developing countries into their programmes and projects, and to intensify efforts towards mainstreaming the modality of technical cooperation among developing countries, *inter alia*, through support to the activities of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, and encourages other relevant international institutions to undertake similar measures;

15. *Notes* that country-driven programming offers additional opportunities for greater use of technical cooperation among developing countries modalities by programme countries;

16. *Requests* the programmes and funds to submit to the Council, through their executive boards, information and analysis in respect of the extent to which cross-cutting themes and goals emerging from global conferences have been integrated into their programme priorities in a coherent manner, as well as in respect of specific steps taken to develop complementary and collaborative approaches with other United Nations organizations in promoting the implementation of global targets, to assist the Secretary-General in the preparation of his report to the General Assembly through the Council on this issue;

17. *Notes* the progress of the Resident Coordinator system in assisting Governments in their efforts towards an integrated and coordinated follow-up to global conferences and encourages further work by the country-level theme groups in addressing the areas highlighted by the Council;

18. *Encourages* the United Nations development system to strengthen efforts towards gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and gender equality, particularly taking into account the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" and the twenty-fourth special session of the

Assembly entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world";

19. *Welcomes* in this context the United Nations ten-year initiative on girls' education launched by the Secretary-General at the World Education Forum in Dakar on 26 April 2000;

20. *Notes* the lessons learned by the programmes and funds in the implementation of their gender-balance policy and calls for further efforts to retain women at mid-career and to actively promote their career advancement;

21. *Appreciates* the progress so far in broadening the pool of Resident Coordinators and in improving the gender balance of Resident Coordinators, and invites the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to make further efforts to increase and monitor their nominations of qualified women candidates for the Resident Coordinator vacancies;

22. *Recommends* that the practice of holding joint meetings of the bureaux of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme be continued, with a view to improving the impact of these meetings, and in this regard, requests the funds and programmes to examine the possibility of having joint reports prepared by their secretariats for these meetings, focused on some issues of specific joint interest, so as to ensure an effective follow-up of the resolutions of the Council and the General Assembly concerning the coordination of operational activities for development and to report thereon to the Council at its substantive session of 2001;

23. *Underlines* the progress achieved in the coordination of operational activities for development, stresses the importance of continuing efforts for improving coordination based on a system-wide approach and, in this regard, welcomes the recent initiatives taken by some specialized agencies to strengthen their participation in the internal coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group and Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions;

24. *Requests* the Secretary General, in the context of the next triennial policy review, to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the impact of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and progress in the implementation of the multi-year funding framework, as part of ongoing efforts to reverse the declining trend in core resources, and also on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities of the United Nations system, including, *inter alia*, recommendations for enhancing the impact of these processes, as well as for appropriate follow-up.